

CORK OPERA HOUSE and JOHN O'BRIEN  
in association with THE EVERYMAN present

# MORRÍGAN

a NEW OPERA by JOHN O'BRIEN  
and ÉADAIOIN O'DONOGHUE

# A note from Eibhlín Gleeson

CEO, Cork Opera House

This is a very special moment for Cork Opera House, our first large-scale homegrown production since our re-opening, and what a fantastic way to celebrate that.

*Morrigan* is many years in the making by John O'Brien and Éadaoin O'Donoghue. It is our privilege to produce it here at Cork Opera House. Cork has always punched above its weight in terms of producing world class artists, and this is no different. John has been a featured artist on our stage for the past 20 years as a musician, music director, conductor, director and now as a composer. His dedication to his hometown is unmatched, having developed and produced some of the most successful, exciting and inclusive projects in the history of Opera in this city.

Éadaoin is a celebrated playwright and actor, one of our very finest. Her work is lauded nationally as a fresh new voice in theatre writing, now with some major works such as *Heart of A Dog* (The Everyman Theatre and Dublin Theatre Festival, 2021) under her belt. This is her first operatic work on the Cork Opera House stage, a stage that she is most deserving of.

Collaboration is at the centre of this work – the incredible collaboration and partnership between John and Éadaoin, their collaboration with the exceptional cast and creative team. And Cork Opera House collaborating with major local artists to provide a deserving platform for their work – something that is central to our mission and our success.

Thank you to John and Éadaoin for bringing this epic production to Cork Opera House. Thanks to the Arts Council of Ireland for their belief in our ability to realise this work. The presentation of this piece is a collaborative effort between The Everyman and Cork Opera House, a historic moment for opera in this city. It shows what we can achieve working together - thank you to Sophie Motley and Sean Kelly of The Everyman for their support in this regard. Lastly, a note of thanks to our exceptional in-house Producer, Rory Murphy, who has championed this project from the beginning and is an enormous part of its success.

Enjoy the show tonight and welcome to Cork Opera House.



# Writers' Note

Éadaoin O'Donoghue and John O'Brien

Opera, for us, is about exploring emotional truth on stage. It is a charged, heightened event with big emotions, and big stories. Folklore, fairy-tales, and myth thrive in the operatic space. As Irish artists, writing *Morrigan* is our way of asking, "Why not our old stories too?" We have set out to create a contemporary, epic, and distinctly Irish Opera. We look back to our ancient past, but reflect our evolving present.

Our phenomenal cast hails from South Korea to Limerick, from Dean's Grange to Sweden, and from Chicago to Blackpool. This is an incredible point of pride, and imbues our production with a fresh, cross-cultural point of view that breathes new life into this old story. Making opera during the pandemic has certainly had its challenges, but we have found an extraordinary team to help us wrestle our ideas into reality, in ways that have exceeded our imagination of what is possible. Opera at this scale and ambition is impossible without the right resources.

We are so grateful to our production partners at Cork Opera House and The Everyman for their belief in us and constant support; and to The Arts Council for empowering us through their funding. This is the biggest, boldest show we have made (so far). It has been such an immense joy to make and we hope it connects with and moves you - the audience.



# Morrígan

From Éadaoin O'Donoghue and John O'Brien, the writers of *The Nightingale and the Rose* and *Lilith*, comes the new opera *Morrígan* - produced by Cork Opera House in association with The Everyman.

She is the Irish Goddess of death and fate. Her story is visceral and primal – one of a beautiful, natural love thwarted by society; of Deirdre and the Sons of Usna; and of a king corrupted by lust and revenge who drags his kingdom to its doom. Sweeping from the epic to the intimate, *Morrígan* contains dramatic scenes of blood and fire, soaring arias, tender duets, and large action packed ensembles with highly charged battle scenes.

## Morrígan Set Design

Alyson Cummins

The ritual of storytelling, which John and Éadaoin have referenced in the opera, inspired the set design. They have also written about dualities: of light and of darkness, of love and violence. It also relates to an elemental world that has a connection with nature; that we see happily through Deirdre, and a vain effort to master it, which is embodied by Conor. I was interested in artists like Anselm Kiefer and Willie Doherty where there is an idea about landscape having memory or holding on to violence or trauma, which felt very relevant to both this story and to Irish history.

## Morrígan Costume Design

Sinéad Cuthbert

*Morrígan* costume design was inspired by the weaving of a story from the present to the past, allowing the Morrígan, the trio Goddess, to transcend linear time and evoke a sacred space and the divine feminine. The world of Conor Mac Nessa, set in ancient Ireland, also connects to universal folk traditions. With tribal influences from the Middle East to Africa to Ireland, the costume colours and textures resonate with a multi-cultural world.



## Cast

**Kim Sheehan** Deirdre  
**Jung Soo Yun** Conor Mac Nessa  
**Majella Cullagh** Leabharcham  
**Julian Tovey** Cathad  
**Joe Corbett** Fergus Mac Roth  
**Simon Morgan** Naoise  
**Viktor Priebe** Ainnle  
**Emma Nash** Ensemble/Cover Deirdre  
**Justine Viani** Ensemble/Cover Leabharcham  
**Annie Gill** Ensemble/Cover Morrigan and Ainnle  
**Gráinne Gillis** Ensemble  
**Ross Scanlon** Ensemble/Cover Naoise  
**Ben Thapa** Ensemble/Cover Conor Mac Nessa  
**Owen Gilhooly-Miles** Ensemble/Cover Fergus Mac Roth  
**Will Frost** Ensemble/Cover Cathad  
**Patrick Nolan** Percussion  
**Patrick Lynch** Percussion  
**Liv Amerie Gregorio** Morrigan (singer)  
**Sarah Ryan** Morrigan (dancer)  
**Karen Underwood** Morrigan (actor)  
**Gavin McEntee** Árdán (actor)

## Creative Team

Conductor **Conor Palliser**  
Director **John O'Brien**  
Set Designer **Alyson Cummins**  
Costume Designer **Sinéad Cuthbert**  
Lighting Designer **Stephen Dodd**  
Movement Director **Eddie Kay**  
Librettist/Associate Director **Éadaoin O'Donoghue**  
Sound Designer **Paul Ashe-Browne**  
Wigs, Hair and Make-Up Designer **Maeve Readman**  
Props Designer **Bethany Cosgrove**  
Associate Set Designer **Pai Rathaya**  
Associate Costume Designer **Lauren Murphy**  
Assistant Lighting Designer **Ronan O'Shea**  
Apprentice Conductor **Caitriona Fitzmaurice**  
Choreography Intern **Jasmine Draper**

## Production Team

Executive Producer **Eibhlín Gleeson**  
Producer **Rory Murphy**  
Production Manager **Drew McCarthy**  
Stage Manager **Bethany Cosgrove**  
Consultant Producer (The Everyman) **Naomi Daly**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Rachel Matthews**  
Assistant Stage Managers **Elizabeth McHugh, Niamh Wiseman**  
Répétiteur **Tom Doyle**  
Orchestra Manager **Aisling Fitzgerald**  
Chief LX **Alan Mooney**  
Sound Engineer **Nicky Ryan**  
Production Assistant **Christiana Underwood**  
Costume Supervisor **Lauren Murphy**  
Costume Assistant/Maker/Dresser **Holly Rose Twomey**  
Costume Makers **Maria Jones, Valentina Gambardella**  
Hair and Make-Up Assistant **Hannah Deasy**  
Orchestra Librarian **Áine Delaney**  
Props Maker **Jenny Whyte**  
Set Builders **Triangle Productions LTD**  
Surtitle Operator **Sidney Uzik**  
Chaperone **Marion O'Brien**  
ASM Intern **Rebecca Flavin**  
Production Intern **Oisín Yiannak**  
Costume Interns **Bridget Brabazon, Michael Moone, Vaiva Naraveckaite**





# Libretto

MUSIC BY JOHN CUNY  
 The Opera is set in a Mythical Iron Age  
 in Ulster and Alba (Scotland)  
 acha - The King's Home  
 girl)  
 Little Girl  
 man/Wild boar/Deer  
 er Woman  
 water mother)  
 Mac Neved  
 King of  
 Cairne  
 Mac Neved  
 Naive  
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 man  
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 of  
 is a good  
 man)  
 Q  
 is not to him I speak.  
 the Ard Ri...  
 woman! Your senseless  
 about your failing.  
 to us now.  
 and kicking  
 in her eyes...  
 The Man, is Death  
 of a disguise.  
 is Death!  
 his is a good omen.)  
 All success

# MORRIGAN

LIBRETTO BY ÉADAIOIN O'DONOGHUE  
MUSIC BY JOHN O'BRIEN

The Opera is set in a Mythical Iron Age,  
in Ulster and Alba (Scotland).

## CAST:

Morrigan/Little Girl  
Morrigan/Young Woman/Wild Boar/Deer  
Morrigan/Older Woman  
Deirdre  
Leabharcham (her foster mother)  
Conor Mac Nessa (High King of Ulster)  
Cathad (the Druid)  
Fergus Mac Roth (the King's Hand)  
Naoise (son of Usna)  
Ainnle (son of Usna)  
Árdán (son of Usna)  
Ensemble of Warriors  
Chorus of People  
Two Percussionists (acolytes of Morrigan)  
Orchestra

## IRISH GLOSSARY (in order of occurrence):

Morrigan: Goddess of Fate & Death  
Árd Rí: High King  
Anachain: Misfortune  
Míádh: Bad luck  
Emain Macha: Fort of the Goddess Macha - The King's Home  
Cailín alainn: Girl beautiful (beautiful girl)  
Seoidín: Little jewel  
Stóirín: Little darling  
Plámás: Flattery, soft talk  
Lus Bhríd: Dandelion (Wort of Bridget)  
an Caisearbhán: Dandelion  
Fliodh 'gus Uachtar: Chickweed and Cream  
Is maith an tuar é sin: A good prediction is that. (This is a good omen.)  
Samhain: Halloween: New Year's Eve  
Solais na Gréine ort!: Light of the Sun on you!  
Gach rath ort: All success to you  
a hÁrd Rí!: o High King!  
Anú: The Goddess of Creation  
Ceasa: Obligation (A sacred, honour bound obligation)  
Craobh Rua: Branch Red (Red Branch)  
Alba: Scotland  
Uisneach: of Usna  
Mo chroí: My heart  
Faire!: Watch! (Beware!)  
Ar aghaidh!: Onward!

## INTRODUCTION

**Morrigan:** All is darkness, lit by prophecy.  
None but I have such eyes to see.  
The Morrigan will tell the tale,  
As she steals behind the veil,  
Of sons, of daughters, bold and frail,  
Of swords that clash and ships that sail.

## PROLOGUE

*A feast is held in honour of the Árd Rí, Conor Mac Nessa; his Hand, Fergus Mac Roth; his Druid, Cathad; and the Warriors of the Craobh Rua. An unborn child lets out a mighty shriek from inside the womb. Leabharcham, enters the hall carrying a new-born baby.*

**Leabharcham:** The mother, I tried to save her.  
Her blood fled too quickly, her pain too great.  
She came to rest at Moonrise,  
But never saw her daughter's eyes.

**Fergus:** What of her husband?

**Leabharcham:** He lies bound in grief's embrace,  
And will not see his daughter's face.  
Árd Rí, the babe lives, strong and wild,  
But in my arms lies no-one's child.

**Ensemble:** Anachain! that falls upon this house.  
This night we hang our heads in sorrow.  
This night we break our hearts in woe.  
Anachain! that falls upon this house.

**Leabharcham:** In my arms lies no-one's child.  
This night we break our hearts in woe!

**Ensemble:** Anachain! that falls upon, falls upon this house.  
If we could see what this means,  
If we could see, if we could know.  
Anachain! that falls upon this house.

**Leabharcham:** In my arms lies no-one's child.  
The Gods can see. We cannot know.

**Ensemble:** Cathad, tell us what it is you see...

**Leabharcham:** It is not to him I speak.  
It is a matter for the Árd Rí...

**Cathad:** Peace woman! Your senseless wailing  
Only serves to flaunt your failing.  
This little one, who comes to us now.  
Reaching out small fingers, and kicking strong feet,  
With beauty's lightning in her eyes...  
Is Míádh, The Morrigan, is Deaith  
That hides in sweet disguise.

Is Míadh, The Morrigan, is Death!  
This child is no child, but a spear roaring for blood.  
No child but a famine. No child but a flood.  
Is Míadh, The Morrigan!

**Leabharcham:** She is motherless and hungry.  
The child is forsaken.

**Fergus:** She is motherless and hungry.  
The child is abandoned.

**Leabharcham:** The child needs to nurse...

**Cathad:** This child is no child. This child is our curse.  
For love of her, Ulster will eat its own young,  
Choke by its own hand, and cut out its own tongue.  
Cast it in the Sacred Fire, where the Gods' flames purify.  
Rains shall cleanse its putrid ash.  
Kill the child, and the curse will die!

**Ensemble:** Kill the child, and the curse will die!

**Leabharcham & Fergus:** An innocent! A babel!  
What will be cannot be known for certain.  
It is but bloody murder, borne of hateful prophecy.  
Save the child. Let her be.

*Conor raises a hand. Everyone falls silent.*

**Conor:** My friends, be still.  
This Day has had enough death.  
No child will die, no blood will spill.  
Cathad, your warning has been heeded,  
But you forget we make a deal with Fate.  
The future is not stone-set and is ours to create.  
Midwife, you will be her foster mother,  
Gone from here by sunrise.  
Rear her far from Emain Macha,  
Out of sight of evil eyes.

**Ensemble & Fergus:** ...far from Emain Macha,  
Out of sight of evil eyes.

**Leabharcham:** Árd Ri.  
Her mother never named her  
Before her spirit left this earth.  
The child has no name.

**Conor:** As the old dies and is re-born anew,  
After this sad day of her birth, may her sorrows be few.  
I name her "Deirdre".

*Leabharcham walks away, singing a lullaby.*

**Leabharcham:** Yellow flowers, yellow flowers, yellow flowers in your hair.

Raindrops falling, raindrops falling, raindrops falling ev'rywhere.  
Little fishes, little fishes, little fishes in the stream.  
Go to sleep now, cailín álainn go to sleep now and you'll dream...  
And you'll dream... dream...

## ACT I SCENE I

*Years have passed. Deirdre is now an unruly teenager with unruly hair, which Leabharcham is trying desperately to comb out.*

**Leabharcham:** Tell me my dearest flower of the gorse,  
Seoidin, how is it you style your hair?  
So artful and with such ease?  
A true unyielding masterpiece. Is it with Glue?

**Deirdre:** Owl!

**Leabharcham:** Is it with tar, or with pitch?

**Deirdre:** Aye!

**Leabharcham:** With tree-sap? With soil? With loam?

**Deirdre:** Owl!

**Leabharcham:** You love the wagtail birds so well,  
You gave them your head to make their home.

**Deirdre:** Wagtails have very good taste.  
They see how I'm pretty,  
And a fine setting for their nest to be.

**Leabharcham:** Oh for shame!  
Did no one tell you, you're a woman, not a tree.

**Deirdre:** That's too hard!

**Leabharcham:** Stop moving!

**Deirdre:** You're too rough.

**Leabharcham:** Stop pulling!

**Deirdre:** Take the knife, cut it out!

**Leabharcham:** More like this, you'll soon be balding!  
Tell me, my sweet stinging nettle,  
Stóirín, How is it you wash your hair?  
So fragrant and so ladylike?  
This rancid, stinking thistle spike!  
Is it manure?

**Deirdre:** Owl!

**Leabharcham:** Is it oil? or mould?



**Deirdre:** Aye!

**Leabharcham:** Bog-water? Clay? Rust?

**Deirdre:** Owl!

**Leabharcham:** You must be like a cat with water;  
You'd rather bathe your hair in dust.  
Careful, my dear, don't hide so your beauty.  
Men will fall for me and not for you.

**Deirdre:** Oh for shame, did no-one tell you?  
No man will love you as I do.

**Leabharcham:** Ha! Indeed! Indeed!  
Now, enough of your talk and your plámás.  
Your hair needs a lotion, and urgent washing!  
Gather me...

**Deirdre:** Horse-tail... and oak moss?

**Leabharcham:** And maybe a sprig of mistletoe.  
Take the basket. Off you go...  
And remember, stay far away...

**Deirdre:** ...from those I do not know.

*Deirdre takes the basket and runs off happily.*

## SCENE 2

*Conor and Fergus are hunting a wild boar.*

**Conor:** Go to the left, I'll block the right,  
We'll close in, take our shot.

**Fergus:** Behind the hawthorn there,  
Trap her in the perfect spot.  
It's on the run!

**Conor:** Look alive! Man! Look alive!

*The boar escapes and the two men give up, breathless.*

**Fergus:** How slow I am!  
I'd have run that boar to death when I was a younger man.

**Conor:** Your best days have been and gone, that's true.

**Fergus:** If you'd ever had one,  
I could say the same for you.  
But the day that is today is long, and we're not licked yet!

**Conor & Fergus:** Tomorrow, we'll take the name.  
We'll call ourselves "old men".  
But only when tomorrow comes, then and only then.

**Fergus:** But time is passing, your beard is greying.  
Rust is creeping in your knee...

**Conor:** Just like your ears and eyes, my friend,  
Not what they used to be.

**Conor & Fergus:** The day that is today is long,  
And not licked yet!  
Tomorrow, we'll take the name.  
We'll call ourselves "old men".  
But only when tomorrow comes, then and only then.

**Conor:** We should move or lose the trail,  
Lest we wave our lunch goodbye.

**Fergus:** I'll tear ahead. You follow on,  
If you manage not to die.

*Fergus rushes off, Conor catches his breath and stays.*

## SCENE 3

*Deirdre is collecting herbs for her hair.*

**Deirdre:** Lus Bhríd, an caisearbhán,  
Will ensure the water flows.  
Meadowsweet will ease sleeping,  
Flíodh 'gus uachtar stíochas bone,  
Elder slows the fever's creeping.  
Water flowing, water flowing, water flowing, easing sleep,  
Fever slowing, fever slowing, fever slowing, breathing...

*Conor happens upon Deirdre, and is transfixed by her.  
He watches her without announcing his presence.*

...deep.  
Horsetail, for hair like briars,  
Where is it that you are hiding...?  
Horsetail, for hair like thorns, a tuft of rushes,  
Where is it you...

**Conor:** *(to himself)* Beauty... As the Sun shimmers on the sea...

**Deirdre:** ...hide?

*Conor approaches Deirdre. Deirdre runs away.*

**Conor:** Wait! Come back, please!  
A Jewel for my crown the Gods have sent to me.  
A Star for my ship that drifts out at sea.  
This striking sight cures time's sickness,  
Stirs my blood, and I am healed.  
A Jewel for my crown this day I have seen.  
This gift, this blinding light, she, alone, will be my Queen.

#### SCENE 4

*Deirdre has run on ahead and told Leabharcham about her encounter with the stranger. Conor follows her to the house. He stands outside and shouts.*

**Conor:** Who is the man of this house?  
Who resides within its walls?

**Leabharcham:** I am the man of this manless house,  
And who are you who calls?

**Conor:** It is the Árd Rí of Emain Macha, Conor Mac Nessa,  
Who'll take your daughter for his wife.  
She will make him the happiest of Kings.

*Leabharcham comes outside.*

**Leabharcham:** My girl is still a child.  
Too young, too girlish for such things.

*Fergus enters.*

**Fergus:** There you are. I thought you lost!  
Any luck or any sign?  
Or anything in between?

**Conor:** No and Yes and Yes and No...  
I lost our lunch but found my Queen.

**Deirdre:** I won't marry him. He's old!

**Leabharcham:** Deirdre!

**Deirdre:** *(To Conor)* My home is here, so here I'll stay.  
Go back to being bad at hunting.

**Fergus:** ...Deirdre?  
Time is passing quickly,  
Ceaselessly, each night is a day betrayed.  
Conor, this young girl is the infant grown  
Who you spared from Cathad's blade.

**Conor:** Is maith an tuar é sin...  
The Gods have had a hand in this!

**Deirdre:** My home is here, so here I'll stay.

**Leabharcham:** She is still too young.  
Too girlish still for a wedding day.

**Conor:** Friends, let me keep your fears at bay.  
Who better than I to protect her?  
Guide her far from harm's way?  
I have spared her life.  
Thus to me her life is justly owed.  
You will want for nothing, Deirdre.

Upon your head, a crown bestowed.  
All I have is yours.  
All that I have, I lay it at your feet.

**Deirdre:** *(To herself)* But I do not wish it so.

*Deirdre runs away. Conor is stung by this. Leabharcham tries to calm the situation.*

**Leabharcham:** I will talk with the girl, Árd Rí.  
She is young. Give her time.

**Fergus:** She is young. She needs time.

**Conor:** She will be brought to court before the Samhain.  
She is young. She has time.  
See that she complies.  
Conor and Fergus leave.

**Leabharcham:** I see a new spark in him that frightens - a dagger in his eyes.

#### SCENE 5

*Deirdre is alone.*

**Deirdre:** The man that I will love, I can see him.  
He shimmers, he shimmers into being.  
I can see him in my mind's eye.  
We are running.  
He is holding my hand so tightly.  
Hair as black as the Raven's wing.  
The man that I will love, I can see him.  
Skin, the white of snow.  
Blood red are his lips.  
I can see him; He waits for me.  
We are running.  
He is holding my hand so tightly.

#### SCENE 6

*Ainnle, Naoise and Árdán have been ordered to attend Conor. As they wait, Ainnle composes a melancholy melody to himself.*

**Naoise:** Ainnle, my brother,  
Will you not rest until you have us weeping?

**Ainnle:** Naoise, my brother,  
Time passes slowly on its own.  
I'm only helping.

**Naoise:** Could you help it pass more cheerfully?

**Ainnle:** The song being born wishes to be sad.  
Its nature's not up to me...

*Árdán gives Ainnle a pleading look.*

**Ainnle:** As you wish, a happy one it is,  
While we await the Árd Rí.  
But all good happy songs have sadness in their heart.  
Even songs of long life know there is an end to ev'ry start.  
But we sing them anyway!

May you live a long and merry life,  
And play joyfully your part!  
May you live a hundred times a hundred years,  
Each one a hundred times a hundred years apart!

**Ainnle, Naoise & Ensemble:** May you live a hundred times  
a hundred years,  
Each one a hundred times a hundred years apart!

*Fergus, then Conor, enters.*

**Fergus:** The singing sons of Usna,  
How you gladden bright the heart!

**Ainnle:** Fergus Mac Roth, Solas na Gréine ort!

**Conor:** The pride of Ulster is always welcome!

**Naoise:** Gach rath ort, a hÁrd Rí!  
But you have not summoned us for music.  
What is the reason for your call?

**Fergus:** The King is to face his greatest trial,  
With an enemy most savage.

**Ainnle:** He is going into battle?

**Fergus:** Worsel! He takes a wife in marriage.

*They all laugh.*

**Conor:** Escort her here to me discretely,  
A veil for her disguise.  
Hide her face away completely,  
Out of sight of evil eyes.

**Naoise:** Your Queen will be kept safe, Árd Rí.  
We wish you both great happiness on your wedding day.

**Ainnle:** It's a fine day to head on a journey.  
I'll perfect my song along the way...

## SCENE 7

*Conor is left alone.*

**Conor:** Anú, our mother of the land, our earth.  
I have served you devotedly.  
The fertile harvest is ever your smiling gift to me.  
Smile upon this union.

I will marry on hallowed ground before you.  
On hallowed ground I kneel before you.

## SCENE 8

*The Sons of Usna arrive at Leabharcham's house.*

**Naoise:** Blessings on this house.  
The Árd Rí sends us to escort his bride to Emain Macha.  
My name is Naoise...

**Leabharcham:** (*Coming out of the house*) I know who you are.  
Deirdre is not likely to be ready.  
Maybe you should take me along instead?

**Naoise:** Maybe indeed!  
But Conor Mac Nessa wants his queen  
And I would like to keep my head!

**Deirdre:** (*From a hiding place*) Do I know this voice?  
A strange melody, I know so well, I know by heart,  
But in my life have never heard.  
The moment comes. I must act.

*She approaches Naoise, coming out from her hiding place.*

Warriors of Usna, are you not?

**Naoise:** We are.

**Deirdre:** Not slave traders or pirates?

**Naoise:** We are not.

**Deirdre:** You do not drag women into bondage?

**Naoise:** We do not.

**Deirdre:** All to the good!  
Then you will not bring me to marry him.  
You will take me far away from Ulster,  
Away across the sea.

**Naoise:** It is from him we take orders not from you.  
Our honour is bound to him in loyalty.

*Deirdre grabs Naoise by the ear.*

**Deirdre:** Ah! So these are not ears of a warrior,  
But of a slave! A dog! A lackey! A weakling!  
As good as dead!  
You are so bound by honour, I'll call upon it!  
I place a Geasa on this head!  
Shame will steal your noble soul if you refuse.  
My life will be a prison, and you'll languish in disgrace.  
Take me out of Conor's reach. Take me from this place.

**Naoise:** Exile or dishonour... none of it my seeking...  
Ainnle, what am I to do?

**Ainnle:** Naoise, You must decide what is just.  
But if you are to run, we will not separate from you.

**Deirdre:** My life will be a prison, and you'll languish in disgrace.

*Árdán steps forward and gravely nods his head.*

**Naoise:** If I am a true Warrior of the Craobh Rua,  
I cannot refuse you, I will do as you ask.

**Leabharcham:** This talk alone is treason.  
If you are to go, go now quickly! Run, Girl, Run!

**Deirdre:** Leabharcham!

**Leabharcham:** Handsome boy,  
Protect her from the king's attack.  
Bring her far from here, far from here.  
May the four winds blow swiftly at your back.

*Leabharcham kisses Deirdre.  
Deirdre and the Sons of Usna run away.*

Run Children!  
May your fire burn strong and bright!  
Lead you safe through this dark night!

## SCENE 9

*The fugitives encounter a Little Girl on their way.*

**Girl:** The Morrigan will eat your head,  
Smash your legs, steal your bread,  
Grind your bones and burn your bed,  
And choke your neck until you're dead.  
The Morrigan will eat your head,  
Smash your legs,

**Ainnle:** Hey there! Hey! Hey you!

**Girl:** Me?

**Ainnle:** Yes you! We have travelled far and are weary.  
Could you spare us some of your bread?

**Girl:** Then you'd have some but I'd have none  
And my mother would beat bald my head.  
Would ye not eat the grass like cattle  
If ye are so starved?

**Deirdre:** I'll give you my hair comb for a trade.  
It's from fine horse bone carved.

**Girl:** Grand so! A broken head but gorgeous hair will do.

**Naoise:** You must tell no-one we were here.  
You'll keep our secret well, won't you?

**Girl:** A secret! I never had one before!  
I'll tell no-one, I promise!  
Not even myself! Not even me!

**Deirdre:** Make sure you keep it safe!

**Ainnle:** A secret isn't yours alone.

**Naoise:** It's shared between all of us now.

*They leave.*

**Girl:** Goodbye! Ye mad things! Safe travels to all of you!  
But if you'd stoop to eat my mother's bread...  
Would ye eat rocks and briars too?

## SCENE 10

*Conor's mind is troubled.*

**Ensemble:** Conor Mac Nessa!  
He's not the man he was. He is old and weak as water!  
His girl bride ran away, young enough to be his daughter.

**Fergus:** You must curb your anger.

**Cathad:** You must show your power.

**Fergus:** You are strong enough.  
Side step this. Let them trip on their own feet.

**Cathad:** The insult is too public.  
Weakness now invites defeat.

**Ensemble & Chorus:** Burn them out. Hunt them down.

**Deirdre:** In search of us, he rips this land apart.

**Ensemble & Chorus:** Flush them out. Strike them down.

**Naoise:** There is no more hiding here.

**Naoise, Deirdre & Ainnle:** To Alba's shore we must depart.

**Fergus:** Pardon their foolish flight.

**Cathad:** And embolden ev'ry enemy and parasite!

**Ensemble:** She enjoys herself with Usna's sons.  
Naoise slips between her thighs.  
They run 'round Ireland while Conor sits at home and cries.  
Anachain! That falls upon this house.

**Deirdre & Ainnle:** In search of us, he rips this land apart.

**Ensemble & Chorus:** Flush them out. Strike them down.

**Cathad:** Burn them out. Hunt them down.

**Naoise, Deirdre & Ainnle:** To Alba's shore we must depart.

**Naoise:** Beauty's lightning in her eye.  
It strikes me in my heart.

**Ensemble:** The Árd Ri is pushing on.  
He drinks the barrel to its dregs.  
The Árd Ri is getting on.  
A saggy rope between his legs.

**Deirdre:** I will not turn back.

**Cathad, Ensemble & Chorus:** Flush them out. Hunt them down.

**Naoise:** This lightning to my heart. She strikes.

**Conor:** The name of Usna, I declare it Unclean.  
The house of the Uisneach, I will have it burned.

**Cathad, Ensemble & Chorus:** Let no one out. Raze it to the ground.

## SCENE 1 I

*Conor and his soldiers surround Leabharcham.*

**Leabharcham:** Conor Mac Nessa,  
How sad to see what you have become.  
Once, you loved these sacred lands.  
Your people were held safe in your hands.  
My girl saw into your heart and ran.  
She saw it clear as day.  
It's too late for Ulster now.  
We all can't run away.

Such a fine, brave army!  
Your honour dies with this old crone!  
Which one of you will I take with me?  
Draw your swords, children.  
I am not afraid to die today.  
But I will not die alone.

*She strikes four of the warriors before they kill her.*

## ENTRACTE

*Exile in Alba. Ainnle, alone, sings of home.*

**Ainnle:** Like rain on the wind, it calls to me.  
It speeds.  
It sweeps down to lift me up.  
My song will carry me.  
It will carry me to where I am no stranger,

To where the tongue is my own,  
To where they play my music,  
And my song is sung and known.  
It will carry me.  
It will carry me there.  
It will carry me home.

*The Sons of Usna and Deirdre hunt a deer.*

## ACT II SCENE 1

*As Ainnle and Árdán sleep, Deirdre and Naoise talk by the fire.*

**Deirdre:** Can you stay with me for a little while  
Beside the embers' glow?

**Naoise:** I will stay with you by the fireside...  
If you wish it so.

**Deirdre:** I saw you in a dream, before we ever met,  
Running through the snow. We could see our breath,  
And you held my hand so tightly.  
I saw you in my dreams...

**Naoise:** My dreams would not dare behold you.

**Deirdre:** You held your hand in mine.

**Naoise:** My dreams could not have foretold you.

**Both:** And now you hold my hand so tightly.  
I will not be set apart from you.

**Deirdre:** Not by Life,

**Naoise:** By Death,

**Deirdre:** By Land,

**Naoise:** By Sea,

**Deirdre & Naoise:** Nor by the veil of dreams in sleep.  
My heart is bound to yours.  
No more shall we part.  
None shall come between us.

**Naoise:** Not Life,

**Deirdre:** Nor Death,

**Naoise:** Not Land,

**Deirdre:** Nor Sea,

**Deirdre & Naoise:** Nor by the veil of dreams in sleep.

## SCENE 2

*Little Girl plays with her dolls.  
Fergus and Cathad counsel Conor.*

**Girl:** Naoise, will you love me, 'til forever 'n' ever is over?  
Let's run away across the sea, far from the mean ol' ogre.

**Fergus:** Árd Ri, you have cut down your own.

**Cathad:** Árd Ri, the land is skin and bone.

**Fergus:** Your enemies are closing in.  
Ulster has been assailed.

**Cathad:** Anú rejects your offering,  
Her gift of harvest has failed!

**Girl:** She ran away. She ran, she ran,

**Cathad:** The Gods despise your name!

**Girl:** Because she loved the lovely man.

**Fergus:** You watch your people bleed!

**Girl:** She ran away. She ran, she ran,  
Because she loved the lovely man.

**Fergus:** You watch your people bleed!

**Girl:** She ran away. She ran, she ran,  
Because she loved the lovely, lovely man.

**Fergus:** Show yourself to them and lead!

## SCENE 3

*Conor walks among his people.*

**Ensemble:** Pity the land that feeds its spite,  
But does not feed its children.

**Ensemble & Chorus:** Pity the land that feeds its spite,  
But does not feed its children.

**Ensemble:** We make soup from stones.  
Our flesh hangs from our bones.  
The Connaught men raid. Usna's Sons exiled.  
Ulster needs a leader now, not a sulking child.

**Ensemble & Chorus:** Pity the land that feeds its spite,  
But does not feed its children.

**Ensemble:** We starve! We bleed! We die!  
The Gods avenge the slaughter.

The blood of Usna rots, and spills into the water!

**Ensemble & Chorus:** Pity the land that feeds its spite,  
But does not feed its children.

*Conor is left alone.*

**Conor:** Am I no man? But rock? But stone?  
Have I earned no reward?  
To this land, my life I swore.  
Anú: Harlot! Fickle Bitch! I'll make of you my Whore!  
I will reclaim my Queen, and take what is mine.  
I will take her back and snap the traitor's spine.  
The people will see the price of treason,  
And keep themselves in line.  
I will give them bread.  
And they will forget.  
They will love me again...  
And they will fear me!

## SCENE 4

*Deirdre is dreaming. Little Girl appears. She is Morrigan.*

**Morrigan:** The Morrigan will eat your head,  
Smash your legs, steal your bread,  
Grind your bones and burn your bed,  
And choke your neck until you're dead.  
I am a little girl.  
I am a tree in a gap.  
I am a salmon in a stream  
That swims and leaps into your lap.

*Conor appears.*

He'll drown your hen and kill your sheep.  
Make you laugh. Make you weep.  
He'll stub your toe, then kiss your cheek,  
And set you crying in your sleep.

*Conor chokes Deirdre.*

His kites are flies. His milk is split.  
His eyes are sties. His wine is spit.  
His words are lies: A maggot pit.

## SCENE 5

*Deirdre jolts awake. Naoise embraces and kisses her.*

**Naoise:** Awake! Awake! Mo chroi, my love!  
The Gods have smiled on us. Happy news they bring!

**Ainnle:** Fergus Mac Roth is here with a pardon from the King!

*Deirdre sees the warning of her dream.*

**Deirdre:** No, he is not.

**Naoise:** We are under his protection!

**Deirdre:** No, we are not.

**Naoise:** The people have demanded our return.

**Deirdre:** No, they have not.

*The men are taken aback at Deirdre's stubbornness.  
Fergus steps forward.*

**Fergus:** Deirdre, your caution is wise,  
But the Árd Ri has seen sense.  
You have my word and my sword.  
My men will come to your defence.

**Ainnle:** We can trust and follow him.  
He will bring us safely home.

**Naoise:** His word is truth itself.  
In all Ireland it is known.

**Deirdre:** Ah! It is Conor's words he speaks!  
Lies! All of it! Lies!  
If we return, we are set at the mercy of a knave!  
If we return to Ireland, we walk into our grave!  
Can you not see it, Naoise?  
Will you not believe me?

**Naoise:** We said we would not part, my love,  
But I'll not tell you what to do.  
Tomorrow, I leave with Fergus and my brothers,  
And I hope the same for you.

*Naoise and the men walk away.  
Deirdre takes some soil in her hand.*

**Deirdre:** Alba, my shelter, my spirited land,  
We slept soundly here. You held us safe in your hand.  
I am sad to leave and go back home,  
But I will not leave Naoise to face his death alone.  
Here we knew a smiling peace, a sweet serenity.  
I thank you from my sad heart. Alba, do not forget me.  
Remember Deirdre and Naoise who are soon to die.  
They walked here once.  
They were happy under your pale, wild sky.

## SCENE 6

*Cathad is alone in a sacred space.*

**Cathad:** Of what, is made, a man,  
That he may laugh, then cry?  
Of what is he cast and shaped,  
That he may live, then die?  
Drawn to fragile flame, in the ever dark of night,  
Tenderly, he reaches out to touch the fleeting light.

*He lights a flame.*

He walks in a dream of waking, a pure child of Anú.  
He must seek his purpose. What must he now do?

*He takes a white feather and a charred bone.  
He enacts a ritual of dark and light, playing with both forces.*

Go to the light. The game will change.  
An end for ev'ry start.  
Go to the dark. The Gods go darker,  
A mirror for the heart.

*He burns the feather. Then collects the soot in a pouch.*

A King wants his Queen.  
At any cost a victory.  
The Gods demand order.  
Fergus Mac Roth is the key.

## SCENE 7

*Cathad arrives amidst the brothers, Fergus and Deirdre,  
who have returned back to Ireland.*

**Cathad:** Fergus Mac Roth...  
Your village has been raided.  
Your wife and daughters dead.  
Your son, who is close to death,  
Calls to you from his bed.

**Naoise:** Fergus, if I could know...  
How to take this sorrow from you...

**Fergus:** My wife... My children...  
Why would the Gods not take me too...?

**Naoise:** Go home to your son.  
Bury your family.  
Take your men to guard you, and bring you safely home.

*Fergus leaves with his men.*

**Cathad:** May the Gods protect poor Fergus,  
And all ill wind fend.

**Deirdre:** Fergus' kin are live and well.  
And this man is not our friend.

**Cathad:** Friend, this is a fever talking.  
She bristles as a briar.  
She knows not what she says.  
She stands too close to the fire.

**Naoise:** I will hear no more of this talk.  
You must stop.  
Deirdre please!

**Deirdre:** Can you not see it, Naoise?

**Naoise:** I'm going to my bed.  
Maybe in sleep I'll get some peace.

*Night falls. Everyone sleeps.  
A circle of flame torches light up in the distance, surrounding  
the camp. Dawn arrives.*

**Cathad:** Go to the dark. The Gods go darker.

*Too late, the Usna warriors realize their betrayal.  
Cathad takes powder from his pouch, and blows it in their eyes.  
The warriors are blinded. They are attacked from all sides.  
With superhuman skill, they defend themselves.*

**Ainnle:** My brother...

*Ainnle looks down and sees a sword in his guts.  
He falls to the ground, dead.  
Árdán lets out a deafening war cry.*

**Ensemble:** Faire!

*Árdán hacks down anyone in his path with incredible ferocity.  
Shrieks of pain and fear ring out as he kills.*

**Naoise:** Árdán!

**Ensemble:** Pull back! Cut him off! Ar aghaidh!

**Conor:** Kill the bull! Kill the mad bull!

*Árdán kills many of the Craobh Rua warriors.  
It takes twenty men to take him down.  
Naoise, fending off other attacks, cannot save him.  
Both his brothers are dead, but Naoise does not surrender.  
Conor has grabbed Deirdre, and puts a knife to her neck.*

**Conor:** (to Naoise) As you did your brothers, would you  
lose her too?

*Naoise drops his sword, his spirit broken.  
Conor offers a long sword.*

**Conor:** Who will take the honour?  
Who will take the traitor's head?

*Silence. No one steps forward. Conor tries to cajole his soldiers.*

**Conor:** This is a good day for Ulster!  
An end to this foul slander.  
My Queen will be calmer now.  
Like my cattle, I will brand her!

**Naoise:** Not by Life, by Death, by Land, by Sea, my love,  
Nor by the veil of dreams...

*Conor puts a sword in his back.*

*Cathad forces Deirdre to watch.  
The Craobh Rua warriors are disgusted.  
Fergus returns, sees what has happened.*

**Fergus:** By the Gods by whom our people swear!

*He notices the bodies of the sons of Usna.*

The Singing Sons of Usna who I loved as my own...

**Deirdre:** Conor Mac Nessa.

Swollen nothing of a man!  
Bury me with the noble ones.  
I will not live when they die.  
Their blood is on your hands,  
May It never dry.

*Fergus slowly rises with grim determination.  
He knocks Cathad's legs from under him and rips out his tongue.  
Fergus holds the severed tongue aloft so everyone can see.*

**Fergus:** I may be an old fool.  
My life is nearly through.  
But whatever good is left in me  
Will die fighting you.

*Deirdre goes to Naoise's body. The world fades away.*

**Deirdre:** My love,  
My Brightness,  
You are so cold.  
I will warm you with my breath.  
I will not be set apart from you.  
Not by Land, or Sea, not by Life or Death...  
Your lips, the white of snow.  
Your skin painted blood red.  
My heart is tied tight to yours.  
Do not run too far ahead my love,  
My Brightness,  
Wait for me.  
I will follow on.  
I will find you.

*Morrigan appears.*

**Morrigan:** The Morrigan will hold your hand  
As you leave the living land.  
She'll walk beside you on the sand,  
All beyond this world's command.

Raindrops falling, raindrops falling,  
Raindrops falling ev'rywhere.  
Little fishes, little fishes, little fishes in the stream.  
Go to sleep now, cailin dainn go to sleep now  
And you'll dream...  
And you'll dream... dream...

**FIN**





# Creative, Production & Cast



**Conor Palliser**  
Conductor

Conor Palliser has established himself as one of Ireland's leading young conductors. He is also a highly-regarded French horn player, pianist, répétiteur and educator. As a conductor, he has worked with the National Symphony Orchestra, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra.

Following his Carnegie Hall debut with the New York Concerti Sinfonietta, critics described him as an "outstanding Irish conductor." He is the Principal Conductor of the Irish Symphonic Wind Orchestra, the Cork School of Music Symphony Orchestra, the 140-member Fleischmann Choir, Chorus Master to the Cork Operatic Society and a regular tutor with the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland. He has been heralded as an advocate for bringing previously unheard works to Irish audiences and regularly performs music by living Irish composers.

As a horn player, Conor has worked with the National Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Camerata Ireland, Wexford Opera and was also a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra and the International Youth Wind Orchestra. He has also worked alongside both the Callino Quartet and the RTÉ Contempo Quartet.

Conor was a finalist of the Irish Freemasons' Young Musician of the Year, a concerto soloist on the National Concert Hall stage and his debut piano recital in 2008 was broadcast by RTÉ's Lyric FM. Conor currently lectures at MTU Cork School of Music.



**John O'Brien**  
Composer and Director

John O'Brien is a composer, director and conductor from Cork. His compositions include: the string quartet *Ecclesiastes* (premiered at this year's Cork Midsummer Festival); the opera *The Nightingale* and the *Rose* (premiered with an Irish tour in 2018); settings of the poems *Easter 1916* (premiered by Fiona Shaw and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra) and *Pluto's Vision of Heaven* (premiered by Cónal Creedon and the Cork Opera House Concert Orchestra); the orchestral *Lullaby for a City* (in a Time of Pandemic) (premiered at Cork Midsummer Festival 2021); a song cycle *Lilith* for jazz singer Karen Underwood; scores for the feature films *Tree Keeper* and *Shem the Penman Sings Again* (premiered at the Galway Film Fleadh); music for the plays *Heart of a Dog* (co-composed with Peter Power), *The Cordelia Dream*, *The Four Face Liar*, *Levin & Levin*, *Sisters of the Rising and Lovers*; as well as other short films, choral works, piano pieces, a symphony, a string quartet, and numerous operatic, choral and orchestral arrangements.

As a conductor and/or director, John has worked on over fifty different productions of opera and musical theatre in Ireland, UK and Canada, and has toured across Europe, Japan and China. John is acclaimed for directing & conducting *Faust*, *Der Vampyr* (both nominated for Best Opera - Irish Times Theatre Awards), *Orpheus*, and *Pagliacci* (winner Best Opera - ITTA) at the Everyman Theatre.

In August, John will conduct Beethoven Symphonies 3 and 5, as part of the Cork Proms at the Opera House. For more see [johnobrien-music.com](http://johnobrien-music.com).



**Alyson Cummins**  
Set Designer

Alyson studied Architecture at University College of Dublin and trained at Motley. She was a finalist in the Linbury Biennial Prize for Stage Design in 2007 and recently won Best Set Design for *Volcano* at The Irish Times Theatre Awards 2022.

Designs include *Wires, Strings & Other Things*, (*The Ark & Music Network Ireland*), *Volcano* (*Attic Projects*), *L'amico Fritz*, *L'Arlesiana*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Zazà*, (*Opera Holland Park*), *Così Fan Tutte*, *Iolanta & L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* (*Royal Academy of Music*), *Medea*, *Our New Girl*, *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living In Paris* (*Gate Theatre Dublin*), *The Tale of Little Bevan* (*Pentabus*), *Last Orders at the Docks*, *The Risen People*, *Heartbreak House*, *Quietly*, *Perve* and *No Escape* (*Abbey Theatre*), *Midsummer*, *This Lime Tree Bower* (*Eoin Kilkenny / Project Arts Centre*), *Thick As Thieves* (*Clean Break & Theatr Clwyd*), *The Lion in Winter* (*English Theatre Frankfurt*), *Tosca* (*Icelandic Opera*), *Gulliver's Travels* (*YMT / Lyric Belfast*), *Sinners*, *The Nativity & The Gingerbread Mix-Up* (*Lyric Belfast*), *The Nest* (*Lyric Belfast/Young Vic*), *Fabric* - *Edinburgh Fringe First Award* (*Robin Rayner/Marlowe Theatre*), *Macbeth* (*Iford Arts*), *The Lighthouse* (*ROH Linbury Studio*), *The Night Alive* (*DTF/Lyric Belfast*), *I Know All The Secrets In My World* (*Tiata Fahodzi*), *Pentecost* (*Lyric Belfast*) - Best Set Design, Irish Times Theatre Award 2015.



**Sinéad Cuthbert**  
Costume Designer

Sinéad is an award winning costume designer and has worked for many theatre companies as supervisor and then designer from the *Passion Machine* to the *Abbey Theatre*. She's also worked with the *Gate Theatre*, *Opera Ireland*, *CoisCéim*, *Landmark* and *Company SJ*. Sinéad was privileged to be Costume Designer for RTÉ's commemoration concert 'Centenary' 2016 and on the Opening Ceremony of the *Ryder Cup* 2006. Since 2004, Sinéad has been course coordinator and lecturer in costume design at the *Samuel Beckett School of Drama*, *Trinity College Dublin*.

Recent projects include: *The Long Christmas Dinner* (*Peacock* 2021) *The Lonesome West*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *The Cripple of Inishmann* (*Gaiety*, 2022/2019); *Dublin By Lamplight* (*Corn Exchange*, *Abbey Theatre*, *GIAF* 2017, *Project* 2004); *The Remains of Maisie Duggan* (*Peacock Theatre*, 2016) *Happy Days* (2021, *Inisheer & DTF*) *Company*, *Beckett in the City: The Women Speak* (*Company SJ*, *Theatre Festival* 2018, 2015, *New York* 2017); *Borstal Boy* (*Gaiety and Verdant*, 2014); *Homeplace* (*Lyric Theatre* 2009); *Translations*, *Making History*, *Amadeus*, *Friel Festival Glenties* (*Ouroboros* 2004-2010); *The Nose*, *Lizzie Lavelle* (performance corporation 2007-2008)..



**Stephen Dodd**  
Lighting Designer

Stephen Dodd is a Lighting Designer for theatre, dance, and opera. Based between Dublin and Cork, he trained at The Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College. He recently won Best Lighting at the 2022 Irish Times Theatre Awards.

Recent lighting designs include: For The Abbey: An Octoroon, The Long Christmas Dinner. For United Fall: Night Dances, Birdboy, Girl Song, Dancehall, Dogs, Listowel Syndrome. For John O'Brien / The Everyman: Heart of a Dog. For Attic Projects: Volcano. For Irish National Opera: A Thing I Cannot Name, Orfeo ed Euridice. For Liz Roche Company: The Here Trio, I/Thou, Wrongheaded. Stephen's work with Junk Ensemble includes Crossing Skin, Dances Like a Bomb, The Misunderstanding of Myrrha, whilst for Dead Centre, he has worked on To Be a Machine (Version 1.0), Beckett's Room and Chekhov's First Play.



**Eddie Kay**  
Movement Director

Studied at London Contemporary Dance School and Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Dance and theatre include: Fatherland, The Believers (Frantic Assembly/MIF); Katie Roche, Ulysses, Unmanageable Sisters (Abbey Theatre); The Pass, You for me for you (Royal Court); All's well that ends well (The Globe); Brave New World (Royal and Derngate); Scuttlers (Manchester Royal Exchange); Masterclass, The Examination, Woman Undone, The Blue Boy, This Beach (Brokentalkers); The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning (National Theatre of Wales); Romeo and Juliet (West Yorkshire Playhouse); Kite (Wrong Crowd); Bromance (BMT)

Associate Movement Director;

Once (West End); Othello (Frantic Assembly); Let the right one in (NTS/Abbey Theatre)



**Éadaoin O'Donoghue**  
Librettist and Associate Director

Éadaoin O'Donoghue is an actor, playwright and director based in Cork City. She graduated from Jacque LeCoq Theatre School, Paris, in 2010. She is a frequent collaborator with composer John O'Brien, with whom she has written the libretto for the opera, The Nightingale and the Rose, which toured nationally in 2018.

Commissioned by Cork Midsummer Festival, she wrote the lyrics for Lilith, a song cycle about Adam's first wife in the Garden of Eden, performed by singer Karen Underwood in 2019 and again in 2020 at Cork Opera House. Her debut play Heart of a Dog, based on the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, was produced by The Everyman and The Civic Theatre and was part of The Dublin Theatre Festival 2021. Her second play Hail to the Great Wave! was produced by Corcadorca in 2021 as part of her three year residency with the company. Éadaoin is also the Cork City Platform 31 artist for 2022.



**Maeve Readman**  
Wigs, Hair and Make-Up Designer

Having completed training in all aspects of wig making, hairdressing, barbering and make-up, Maeve works extensively in the world of theatre, film and television. She has designed and worked on: Lismore and Blackwater Valley Opera Festivals, Marriage of Figaro, Magic Flute, La Cenerentola, Così fan Tutte, l'elisir de amore and l'Italiana in Algeria, Orfeo ed Euridice. Her work with Cork Opera House includes Grease, The Sound Of Music, Michael Collins, Dido and Aneas, Maria de Buenos Aires, Prodijij: The Revolution, along with pantomimes Aladdin, Sleeping Beauty, Beauty & The Beast, Cinderella and Snow White, Peter Pan and Nanny Nellie's Adventures in Pantoland.

She has also worked on many film and fashion productions including: the History Channel's Vikings (Season 1, 2, 3 and 4), Penny Dreadful, Dawn (Pilot), BBC's Redwater (Eastenders spin-off), Into the Badlands (season 2 and 3), BBC's TV series of The Young Offenders, Rosie (Roddy Doyle), NightFlyers (Netflix), Foundation, The Green Knight, The Silence of Mercy, Holding (ITV), Murder at the Cottage (Jim Sheridan) and Dancing with the Stars. Maeve has also worked on TV advertisements including McDonald's and The Irish Cancer Society and Boots.



**Bethany Cosgrove**  
Props Designer/Stage Manager

Bethany has studied and graduated with an Honours Bachelors degree in Design and Visual Communications from Crawford and CIT. She has had the pleasure of working as Graphic Designer for the Cork Opera House since 2019. She has worked in the Irish Film and TV industry as part of the Art department. Some of the films Bethany has worked on include Maze (2017), Michael Inside (2018) and as Production Designer on Mary (2018).

Bethany worked as a Production Designer with CCCahoots (The School, RTE). An Irish TV and Film production company, specialising in comedy. In addition to TV and Film work, Bethany was involved in Cork Opera House's hit production ProdiJIG: The Revolution (2016, 2017) production. Bethany has maintained a strong relationship with the Cork Opera House, as Assistant Stage Manager in Cinderella (2016), Snow White (2017), The Wizard of Oz (2018), Aladdin (2018), Peter Pan (2019). She has also worked as Concert Stage Manager for the 2019 Opera Concert Series.

Bethany worked as set and prop designer for Nanny Nellie's Panto Telly (2020) and was Stage Manager for Nanny Nellie's Adventures in Pantoland (2022).



**Pai Rathaya**  
Associate Set Designer

Pai Rathaya is a Thai theatre designer based in Dublin and Bangkok who has worked as a set and costume designer. Her work spans theatre, opera, musical, and dance. Rathaya graduated with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and Master of Dramatic Arts from Chulalongkorn University. In 2018, she moved to Dublin to study MFA stage design at the Lir Academy and graduated with distinction.

Pai is part of the SEEDS Apprentices program 2021, Rough Magic. Also, she is the recipient of the Irish Times Theatre Awards, best set design for Volcano by Attic Project, alongside Alyson Cummins.



**Lauren Murphy**  
Associate Costume Designer/  
Costume Supervisor

Lauren Murphy is a costume designer whose extensive career includes work at Wexford Opera House, English National Opera, Nevil Holt Opera, English National Touring Opera and on the West End. She was also a dressmaker for Ireland's Got Talent and Cameron Macintosh Productions, including The Phantom of the Opera and Les Miserables.

Lauren has worked across the costume department in the Bord Gais Energy Theatre on several musicals including Jersey Boys and The Bodyguard. She has worked on three seasons of Valhalla for Netflix. She has a BA in Costume and Design from IADT and has also lectured in Costume and Supervising at IADT. This year she was costume designer for the Abbey's 05 Festival.



**Ronan O'Shea**  
Assistant Lighting Designer

Ronan is a Lighting Designer, Lighting Programmer and Technical Consultant working in Ireland and internationally. His theatre credits include (as Lighting Designer): Interference and Glen Hansard (Cyprus Avenue), (UN)Holy Blood (Circus Factory Cork), Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat (I.N.E.C. Arena), ELECTRA (KINO Cork), DNA, Katty Barry: Queen of the Coal Quay (Cork Arts Theatre), Straight On 'Til Morning (Theatre Development Centre), Woman and Scarecrow, The Things I Could Never Tell Stephen, A Bunch of Amateurs and The Children's Hour (Granary Theatre).

He has also worked as Associate/Assistant Lighting Designer on The Same (LD. Michael Hurley, Irish Arts Centre, New York), Gregory Porter (LD. Al Crawford, Royal Albert Hall, London), The Lost Colony (LD. Josh Allen, Waterside Theatre, NC, USA), This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing (LD. Hanan Sheedy, Irish National Tour). Ronan recently completed a UK Arena tour with Grammy award-winning vocalist Gregory Porter as Touring Lighting Designe and is also the proud recipient of the ETC Fred Foster Mentorship Award.



**Rory Murphy**  
Producer

Rory Murphy was appointed Producer at Cork Opera House for the pantomime production of Aladdin 2018/2019. Prior to this Rory was Line Producer for the Cork Opera House production of Prodigjig: the Revolution 2016 and its remount in 2017. He worked as Company Manager on the Cork Opera House production of Annie in Summer 2017. Rory has line produced Cork Opera house Pantomimes Beauty and the Beast (2015), Cinderella (2016) Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (2017). Rory also worked as Assistant Producer on The Wizard of Oz (2018) and was Producer for Peter Pan (2019) Nanny Nellie's Panto Telly (2020) and Nanny Nellie's Adventures in Pantoland (2021).

Rory has also worked on many film productions including The Flag, The Last Duel, and Disenchanted.



**Rachel Lothead Matthews**  
Deputy Stage Manager

Rachel is a freelance stage manager who works on a variety of productions including plays, musicals, operas and occasionally an online escape room. Rachel graduated from the Production Technology and management course at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2019 and was awarded the Julia Stewart Award for top student of the graduating year.

Since graduating, Rachel has stage managed all over the UK, in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Leeds, Bristol and London. This is her first time in Ireland let alone working. Recently she was the Deputy Stage Manager for 'The Rhythmics' (Southwark Playhouse). Whilst studying her credits include DSM for the European premiere of the opera; Dead Man Walking (RCS New Athenium), Stage management intern; Waitress (The Adelphi, London) and Venue Stage manager (Underbelly Edinburgh Fringe).



**Elizabeth McHugh**  
Assistant Stage Manager

Elizabeth McHugh is a graduate of the Arts Management and Creative Producing MA at University College Cork. During her MA, Elizabeth was a member of Tús Nua, a collective of producers, who curated the online Half Moon Festival 2020. During this time Elizabeth worked closely with Mint Productions and produced two back to back short films Earwig/ Electra. Elizabeth's relationship with Cork Opera House first began in 2018 as a stage management intern working on the Christmas Panto, Aladdin, since then she has assisted on various shows such as Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro, Cara; A Celebration, The Pirates of Penzance, Christmas Concert 2019 and Nanny Neillie's Adventures in Pantoland 2021.

More recently, Elizabeth has worked as a Producer and Production Stage Manager for the 2021 Dublin Arts and Human Rights Festival and began working in film production this year, working on films including The Gates, Double Blind, Four Mothers and Flora & Son.



**Niamh Wiseman**  
Assistant Stage Manager

Niamh is a stage actor with a keen interest in Stage Management, living and based in Cork.

Experience of 10+ years in acting on the stage. Fully trained in ballet and modern dance. Recent Credits; The Tempest (2022); Jack and the Beanstalk (2018), Hairspray (2017), The Magical Adventure of James and Matilda (2017) Clue (2016). Niamh's is also a graduate of Wolfe Stage School 2010-2018, Marissa Fragolini's School of Dance 2006-2018.



**Tom Doyle**  
Répétiteur

A graduate of both UCC and MTU Cork School of Music, Tom Doyle is highly sought after as a musical director and pianist in Cork City and its environs. With a keen interest in both musical theatre and opera, Tom's credits as musical director have included: The Stalls (Ulysses Theatre Company & Cork Midsummer Festival), Pubcrawl: the Musical (Chattyboo Productions), The Events (MTU Cork School of Music), I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change (Chattyboo Productions), American Idiot (MTU Musical Society), Songs for a New World (Hibernian Ensemble), The Opera Director based on Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor, The Last Five Years (Scruffy Duck Productions), Ragtime (UCC Dramat) and [title of show] (UCC Dramat).

As a choral enthusiast, Tom has had the pleasure of working with the UCC Choral Society, Blackpool Parish Choir, Mayfield Gospel Choir, the Fleischmann Choir, Cork ETB Youth Choir, the workplace choirs at Musgraves and Cork County Council, Munster Rugby Supporters Club Choir, Cantate, the choir at Presentation Secondary School Ballyphehane, the Willcolane Singers, and the Cork Garda Male Voice Choir.

An accomplished pianist and répétiteur, Tom has worked with many renowned Irish singers, as well as ensembles such as Irish Youth Opera and Cork Operatic Society.



**Aisling Fitzgerald**  
Orchestra Manager

Aisling Fitzgerald is a freelance Producer and Opera Administrator from Tipperary and holds BAMus and BMus honours degrees and Higher Diploma in Education (Music and English) from University College Cork. Qualifying in Stage Management at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Aisling worked exclusively in Opera Stage Management for over sixteen years with International Award-Winning Opera Festivals and houses including Shanghai Grand Opera, Les Azuriales Opera, New York Joyce Theatre, Wexford Festival Opera, Garsington Opera, Opera Holland Park, Grange Park Opera, prestigious venues such as Buckingham Palace, the Royal Albert Hall and worked primarily with The Royal Ballet and The Royal Opera at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden London between 2010 and 2016.

Aisling has most recently worked as Producer for the Opera Concert Series at the Cork Opera House, Production Stage Manager for Wexford Festival Opera and was appointed Producing Facilitator and Mentor for the MA in Arts Management and Creative Producing at University College Cork in 2019. Aisling has recently completed her pro-bono work in coaching competency as part of the MSc in Personal and Management coaching at University College Cork specialising in the coaching of opera artists. Aisling is an alumni of the OPERA America Leadership Intensive cohort (2020) and the Opera Europa Opera Management cohort (2018).



**Christiana Underwood**  
Production Assistant

Christiana holds a BA in Popular Music: Voice and graduated in 2018 with a First Class Honours. She also previously graduated with a Level 6 in Music, Performance and Production in CSN. Christiana worked as Events Manager in Voiceworks Studios from September 2019-2021 and is currently a performance/voice coach for Voiceworks Studios and ACA of Performing Arts.

Christiana was Co-Stage Manager for Virtual Voice Conference, Vocology in Practice, 2020. She is also a solo recording artist leading her self-titled band and a backing vocalist/vocal arranger for Karen Underwood.

# Cast



**Kim Sheehan**  
Deirdre

Crosshaven-born Kim Sheehan has firmly established herself as a quintessential coloratura soprano, performing throughout Europe and the UK with companies such as The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Zürich Opera House, Wexford Festival Opera, Opera North, Garsington Opera, Grange Park Opera and Irish National Opera.

Kim's highlights include singing Diana in the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Diana and Acteon* at the ROH; her portrayal of the title role in *The Nightingale* and the *Rose* with *The Everyman*, her hallmark role of *Queen of the Night* with INO's *The Magic Flute* and a nationwide tour of Poulenc's one-woman opera *The Human Voice*.

Kim graduated with the Gold Medal from DIT Conservatory of Music, Dublin before taking up a four-year scholarship at the Benjamin Britten International Opera School at the Royal College of Music, London and from there Kim continued onto the prestigious International Opera Studio at Zürich Opera House.



**Jung Soo Yun**  
Conor Mac Nessa

London-based tenor Jung Soo Yun studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the International Academy of Voice with Dennis O'Neill CBE.

A winner of the Montserrat Caballé International Singing Competition (Spain) and Richard Tauber Prize (London), Yun's recent engagements have seen him perform the role of Zamoro in Verdi's rarely performed *Alzira* (Buxton International Festival) for which he garnered high critical acclaim. Elsewhere he has performed *Italian Singer* in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Macduff in *Macbeth*, Nemorio in *L'elisir D'amor* (Opera North) *Rinuccio* in *Gianni Schicchi*, *Rodolfo* in *La Bohème* (Gothenburg Opera), *Rodolfo* in *La Bohème*, *Alfredo* in *La Traviata* (Danish National Opera), *Nadir* in *Les pêcheurs de perles*, *Rinuccio* in *Gianni Schicchi* (Opera Holland Park), *Lensky* in *Eugene Onegin* (Grange Park Opera).

Future engagements will see him make major role and house debuts including *Henri* in *Les vêpres siciliennes*, the *Italian Tenor* in *Der Rosenkavalier*, the title role in *Faust*, and *Rodolfo* in *La bohème* at Welsh National Opera and Göteborg Opera.



**Majella Cullagh**  
Leabharcham

Majella Cullagh is one of Ireland's foremost international opera singers. She trained with Maeve Coughlan at the MTU Cork School of Music and is a graduate of London's prestigious National Opera Studio. Majella's repertoire spans baroque through bel canto to contemporary opera. Highlights include Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* (Dallas Opera and Royal Swedish Opera), *Linda di Chamounix* (Donizetti Festival Bergamo and Opera de Toulon) and *Roberto Devereux* (Opera Holland Park, London, with Maestro Richard Bonyngne), *Rossini's La Gazza Ladra* (Opera di Verona), *Verdi's La Traviata* (Glyndebourne on Tour) and *Alzira* (Opera St Gallen, Switzerland), *Massenet's Manon* (Opera New Zealand) and *John Adam's The Death of Klinghoffer* (Concertgebouw, Amsterdam).

Majella performs extensively in oratorio and on the concert platform. She has sung *Berlioz's Huit Scenes de Faust* in Venice at La Fenice under the baton of Jeffrey Tate, *Verdi's Messa di Requiem* in Milan and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and *Rossini's Stabat Mater* at the Barbican Centre with the BBC concert orchestra.



**Julian Tovey**  
Cathad

Notable appearances have included Winston Smith 1984 (*La Scala*, Milan), the title role in *Wozzeck* (Theater St Gallen and Israeli Opera), *Elektra* (with Deborah Polaski and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, under Lorin Maazel), *Albert* in the world premiere of *Fabio Vacchi's Lo Stesso Mare* (Teatro Petruzzelli, Bari), *Trinity Moses Der Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Israeli Opera) and *Mephistophélès Gounod's Faust* (Cork).

He has appeared in Ring Cycles as *Donner* with the Canadian Opera Company, *Flemish Opera*, *L'Opera National du Rhin* and *Tyroler Festspiele*. He sang *1er Nazarener Salome* (Netherlands Opera and Royal Opera, Covent Garden), *Bonze* in *Anthony Minghella's* production of *Madam Butterfly* (English National Opera), *Surin Queen of Spades* (Opera North) and *Conte Almaviva Le Nozze di Figaro* (Garsington Opera), *Obolski Das Feuerwerk* (Wiesbaden), *Escamillo* and *1st Workman Der Silbersee* (Wexford Festival), *Danilo Die Lustige Witwe* (Oporto), *Emile* South Pacific (Dublin) and *Brander La Damnation de Faust* (Singapore).

He has performed under conductors including Philippe Jordan, Edo de Waart, Ivan Torcz, Martin Brabyns, William Christie and Gerard Schwarz. Collaborations with directors have included Robert Lepage, David McVicar, Peter Konwitschny, Keith Warner, John Cox, Ivo van Hove and John Fulljames.



**Joe Corbett**  
Fergus Mac Roth

Cork baritone Joe Corbett studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, and Cork School of Music.

In Ireland, Joe's roles include Papageno/The Magic Flute, Guglielmo/Così fan Tutte, Silvio/Pagliacci, Tarquinius/The Rape of Lucretia, Escamillo/Carmen, Harašta/Cunning Little Vixen (Brno), Schaunard/La Bohème, and Baritone/The Four Note Opera (Düsseldorf) for Opera Theatre Company, Dancraio/Carmen and Masetto/Don Giovanni for Opera Ireland, Osmin/Zaide for Wexford Festival Opera on tour, Rex/The Invader at the National Opera House, and Cecil/Mary Stuart for Opera Northern Ireland. Roles in concert include Ko-Ko/The Mikado and Major-General Stanley/The Pirates of Penzance for Cork Opera House.

Joe has sung the Narrator/Gentle Giant for the Royal Opera, Papageno, Schaunard, The Count/Figaro, and Starveling/A Midsummer Night's Dream for English Touring Opera, and Uberto/La Serva Padrona at Wilton's Music Hall. His acting and music theatre performances include Side By Side By Sondheim (The Everyman), Petruccio/Kiss Me Kate (Norwich Playhouse), Sky Masterson/Guys and Dolls (Pimlico Opera), Sam/Trouble in Tahiti (Antwerp), Uncle Tony/Deflowerfucked and Tiresias/Oedipus Loves You (Canadian tour) for Pan Pan Theatre, and Leopold/Der Rosenkavalier for The Royal Opera. He toured Europe with Opera Circus as The Gigolo in Shameless and The Baritone/Kill Me, I Love You, and he sang for the Royal National Theatre's production of The Bacchae at the Olivier Theatre.



**Simon Morgan**  
Naoise

Simon's Operatic roles at the National Concert Hall include Marcello in La bohème, and Belcore in L'Elisir D'Amore. Silvio in I Pagliacci at The Everyman Palace Theatre; Aeneas in Dido and Aeneas at Cork Opera House; Noye in Noyes Fludde in St Mary's Cathedral as part of Limerick City of Culture celebrations. At Dublin's Gate Theatre, Simon played Antony in their award-winning production of Stephen Sondheim's Sweeney Todd. Simon played Lord Ruthven in Der Vampyr, for the Bram Stoker Festival Dublin and The Prince in Bird by Julie Feeney at Galway Arts Festival.

Highlighted concert performances include Bach's B Minor Mass, Christmas Oratorio, The Mozart Requiem, Saint-Saens Oratorio De Noel, the Chichester Psalms and Carmina Burana. Haydn's Creation at NUÍ Maynooth, Onassis in Callas, and Danilo in The Merry Widow.

Simon has also written and arranged music for RTÉ, the BBC, Plácido Domingo, and the RTE Concert Orchestra. Following on from his first solo Album with Orchestra, I'll Be Seeing You, his latest album Thomas Moore Reimagined was album of the week on RTE Lyric FM, reached number 1 in the Irish Album Charts, launched at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 2019. An Ethnomusicologist, Simon is part of the World Music Creative Stolen Chicken touring Eastern Europe, Spain, Ireland, Norway and Switzerland in late 2022.



**Viktor Priebe**  
Ainnle

Viktor Priebe is a High Countertenor, from Stockholm, who, from an early age honed his skills at musically profiled schools and participated in various master classes with singers and musicians such as Mariusz Kwiecień, Sergejs Jēgers & Nomedā Kazlaus, Ann Hallenberg & Magnus Svensson, Prof. Agnieszka Monasterska, Matjaz Robavs, Prof. dr hab. Dariusz Paradowski.

Viktor has a master's degree in Arts, Vocal and Acting Faculty at the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań, Poland and is now working on his doctoral degree.

He has been rewarded scholarships and prizes throughout his career such as: 1st Prize at the 7th International JSFest Competition, Turkey, Finland, 2019, 3rd Prize, Giulio Perotti-Prize for the best countertenor voice and prize for best interpretation of a song from their home country at the 4th International Giulio Perotti Singing Competition in Ueckermünde, Germany, 2015.



**Emma Nash**  
Ensemble / Cover Deirdre

Cork soprano Emma Nash is an alumna of Opera Theatre Company's young artist programme, winner of the PWC/ Wexford Festival Opera Emerging Young Artist bursary and the UCH Limerick Rising Star Award. Recent engagements include the roles of The Sandman/Dew-Fairy in the Irish Times Award winning production of Hansel and Gretel with Irish National Opera/Theatre Lovett and the roles of Die Vertraute/ Fünfte Magd in INO's sold out run of Strauss' Elektra as part of The Kilkenny Arts Festival.

Other opera highlights include roles with Wexford Festival Opera, Irish National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera Collective Ireland and Longborough Opera Festival. Concert highlights include performances with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Monteverdi Choir, City of Dublin Chamber Orchestra and The Cork Concert Orchestra. The Wallstreet Journal praised A Message for Marty by Conor Mitchell as "hilarious, opera extremism in modern dress".

Emma also appeared in Irish National Opera's Casta Diva pilot event with Cork Opera House, A Diva Christmas live from COH and Diva with The Cork Orchestral Society. Emma is a featured artist alongside rappers MuRli and God Knives in Body & Soul Festivals new movie Ériu, which premiered at the Lighthouse Cinema Dublin and is available to stream on the RTÉ Player. Upcoming engagements include The Cork Proms – Beatles at Cork Opera House.





**Justine Viani**  
Ensemble / Cover Leabharcham

The Australian-British soprano Justine Viani studied at RNCM, and completed her Masters degree with Dennis O'Neill at WIAW in 2012. She made her stage debut singing the title role of Richard Strauss' Salome at the Theatre der Stadt Heidelberg in April 2010 to great success. Since then she has performed internationally roles such as, Tosca, Duchess (Powder her Face), Gerhilde (Walküre), Daphne, Chrysothemis (Elektra), Ariadne, Sieglinde (Die Walküre), Salud (La Vida Breve), Desdemona (Otello), Vitellia (La Clemenza di Tito), Donna Elvira (Don Giovanni), Santuzza (Cavalleria rusticana), Kaiserin (Die Frau ohne Schatten) amongst others.

Ms Viani has performed extensively as an oratorio soloist while in concert she has performed Strauss' Orchestral Lieder Op.27, Vier Letzte Lieder and Wagner's Wesendonck Lieder. She has given various Liederabend concentrating on Berg, Brahms, Mahler, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss and Wagner.



**Annie Gill**  
Ensemble / Cover Morrigan and Ainnle

Born in Scotland, Annie completed her studies at the RNCM and the Opéra National du Rhin in Strasbourg. She is known for her warm toned voice, vibrant stage presence and musical versatility. Opera credits include Mercedes in a new production of Carmen at the Opéra Comique directed by Adrian Noble and conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, and the same role for Opera North. She sang the title role in the same piece for Scottish Opera. Waltraute in Die Walküre and Amore/Valletto in L'Incoronazione di Poppea (dir. Sir David McVicar) at the Opéra National du Rhin and Siebel in Gounod's Faust with John O'Brien at The Everyman Theatre.

Other highlights have included a national Tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra concluding at the Sydney Opera House, Durufle Requiem with the Orchestre Nationale de Paris and the world premiere of Skin Deep with Opera North.



**Gráinne Gillis**  
Ensemble

Praised by the Observer as having a voice with 'rich, dramatic potential', Gráinne Gillis is an Irish-American contralto who grew up in Cork. She read Music at UCC and graduated from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. In 2018/19, she sang Flora in the Olivier award-winning King's Head Theatre's production of La Traviata and opened the London Song Festival. Other highlights included Hélène in Faust et Hélène, the Old Woman in Candide and La Zia Principessa in Suor Angelica at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. In 2019/20, she made her Irish debut as Ruth in The Pirates of Penzance at Cork Opera House, and Vampyrmeister/Suse in Der Vampyr for Gothic Opera (Offie-nominated).

Most recently, Gráinne was involved in a number of online projects including No Room No Room No Room, aired on Operavision, Last Party on Earth on film and at Tête-à-Tête 2020, Bread and Circuses, Random Opera's Gianni Schicchi and La Femme Lunatique's Elizabeth Bishop.

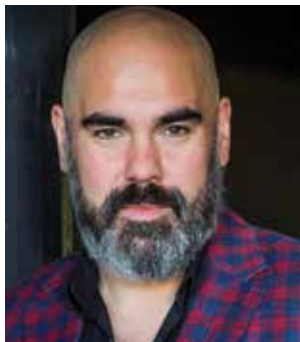
She also narrated, co-composed and sang on a soundscape project, Utterances I, commemorating the women who founded the Irish Free State; performed She-Ancient in The Midsummer Marriage with Regent's Opera, and Process:Dress (one-woman shows Mezzo Sings The Bard & The Contralto Cabaret) at WAF 2022.



**Ross Scanlon**  
Ensemble / Cover Naoise

Ross Scanlon trained at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama where he was awarded the Michael McNamara Gold Medal of excellence in performance and at the Royal Academy of Music, London. His operatic roles include Le Théière L'Enfant et les sortilèges with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Barbican, London; Hot Biscuit Paul Bunyan for Welsh National Opera; John Pynes Vagabones, Irus The Return of Ulysses and Male Chorus The Rape of Lucretia for Opera Collective Ireland, Ed A Belfast Opera for NI Opera, Bookkeeper The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny for OTC, Dublin, Remendado Carmen for Lyric Opera, Dublin and Tamino Die Zauberflöte for Glashule Opera.

Ross sings widely in concert, his engagements including Alexander's Feast, Messiah and The Creation with the RTE Concert Orchestra, Messiah at the Halle Festival, Germany, at the Handel Music Festival, Dublin, and with the Irish Philharmonic Orchestra. Other oratorio's include Britten Saint Nicolas, Dvořák Stabat Mater, Handel's Coronation Anthems, Haydn Die Jahreszeiten and Missa in Tempore Belli, Mendelssohn Elijah and St Paul, Stainer Crucifixion, Mozart's Vesperae Solemnes de Confessore and Coronation Mass, Schubert's Mass in B flat, Jenkins 'The Armed Man – A Mass for Peace', Goodall Eternal Light – A Requiem (Irish Premiere), Bach Magnificat and Respighi Lauda per la Natività del Signore.



**Ben Thapa**  
Ensemble / Cover Conor Mac Nessa

Ben Thapa studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Royal College of Music, London and at the Wales International Academy of Voice with Dennis O'Neill, supported by the Musicians Benevolent Fund, the Joaninha Trust and the Wagner Society.

Operatic roles include Arbace Idomeneo and Aufidio Lucio Silla for Buxton International Festival; Melot Tristan and Isolde for Longborough Festival Opera; Monostatos Die Zauberflöte for Opera de Baugé Kuzka Khovanschina for Birmingham Opera Company; Tito La Clemenza di Tito at the Teatru Manoel; Vanya Kudrjas Kát'a Kabanová for Scottish Opera; and The President in Stockhausen's Mittwoch aus Litcht for Birmingham Opera Company and at the BBC Proms. He has also performed Tamino Die Zauberflöte and Florestan Fidelio for Garsington Opera's Emerging Artists.

Ben is an active performer on the concert platform across a wide range of repertoire. Highlights include Monteverdi Vespers (Monteverdi Choir); performances of Handel Messiah, Haydn Creation & Mozart Réquiem at the Royal Albert Hall; Vaughan Williams Serenade to Music at the Royal Festival Hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra; and Rossini Petite messe solennelle at Jesus College Cambridge.



**Owen Gilhooly Miles**  
Ensemble / Cover Fergus Mac Roth

Owen Gilhooly-Miles is a graduate of the Royal College of Music and National Opera Studio in London. He made his Royal Opera House debut singing the Fauré Requiem for The Royal Ballet and in 2007 represented Ireland at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. He is also a Professor of Singing at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. In opera, he has performed with Opera Ireland, Opera Theatre Company, English Touring Opera, Lyric Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North, Buxton International Festival, The Opera Group and Musikwerkstatt Wien. Additionally, he has appeared in many productions for Wexford Festival Opera and the Lismore Opera Festival. In 2014 he made his debut for The Royal Opera singing the role of Robert in the world première of Luke Bedford's Through his Teeth.

In concert, he has appeared with the RTÉ National Symphony and Concert Orchestras, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Tokyo Symphony Orchestras, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and London Philharmonic Orchestras. He has performed at the BBC Prom in HMS Pinafore and Janáček's Osud with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, with whom he also performed in Judith Wier's The Vanishing Bridegroom.



**Will Frost**  
Ensemble / Cover Cathad

Hailing from West Yorkshire, Bass Baritone Will Frost has enjoyed success singing round the UK since his recent graduation of a Masters at the RCS (2021). Singing for Scottish Opera in The Gondoliers (2021) and covering the role of Snug in A Midsummer Night's Dream (2022). He recently toured with Opera North in their acclaimed performance of Parsifal (2022) and will return for their tour of La Traviata.

He is also performing with Scottish group Opera Bohemia in their production of The Marriage of Figaro as Bartolo in August (2022). Has enjoyed the privilege, in the past, of singing for HRH Prince of Wales for his birthday in a premier quartet written and conducted by Sir James Macmillan (2019).

After receiving the Dick Maidment and Peggy Cooper award, he went on to sing with Garsington Opera in their 2021 season as an Alvarez young artist.



**Patrick Nolan**  
Percussion

Patrick Nolan enjoys an eclectic career as a freelance percussionist. Moving to Glasgow from his native Dublin in 2009, he studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under the guidance of Kurt-Hans Goedicke, John Poulter, Tom Hunter, Martin Gibson, Christopher Lamb and Eric Sammut. During his time at the RCS, he was the winner of the Governors' Recital Prize and the recipient of the ABRSM Scholarship.

Patrick is a regular guest performer with many of the UK and Ireland's orchestras, including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, Irish Chamber Orchestra and Royal Northern Sinfonia. He has had the honour of touring with the European Union Youth Orchestra and is a founding member of the Glasgow Percussion Collective. Since 2017, he has been Principal Percussion of Wexford Festival Opera.

Recent engagements in Ireland have seen Patrick tour with Crash Ensemble as well as collaborating with Patrick Lynch performing Linda and Irene Buckley's new live score to Fritz Lang's Metropolis at the Cork International Film Festival.

# Cast



**Patrick Lynch**  
Percussion

Coming from a musical family, Patrick has always been drawn to the world of music. In 2019, he graduated from the CIT (now MTU) Cork School of Music, having studied percussion under the tutelage of Stephen Kelly and Alex Petcu. Since then he has had the privilege of playing with many wonderful ensembles such as the Cork Opera House Concert Orchestra, Alex Petcu's Bangers and Crash, Sinfonua, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

He also enjoys playing various solo recitals and was a featured soloist at the Summer Music on the Shannon Festival in 2017. Away from classical music, Patrick has had the pleasure of playing with many wonderful jazz musicians such as Scott Hamilton, Grace Kelly, Dick Oatts and many more.



**Liv Amerie Gregorio**  
Morrigan (Singer)

Liv displayed interest in music from the age of two by singing nursery rhymes and dancing to the latest pop songs. She is attending musical theatre classes in Montfort College and Voiceworks Studios for her voice lessons. She played Molly in Annie for Cork Opera House's 2017 summer production.

In December 2018, she performed in Cork Opera House again as one of the soloists for their Christmas concert. Liv joined Ireland's Got Talent second season in the same year and became the youngest act to get through to the semi-finals. She also sang in A Summer's Evening in the Quad in UCC July 2019. She had her first opera concert January 2020 in Everyman Palace and played as the Little Girl in Deirdre And the Sons of Usna.

**Gavin McEntee**  
Ardán

Gavin McEntee is a freelance theatre maker, writer and performer and production manager. Gavin is a graduate of Drama and Theatre studies at UCC (B.A). He is also associate director at Conflicted Theatre and one of the six artistic directors of Broken Crow Theatre Co.



**Sarah Ryan**  
Morrigan (Dancer)

Sarah Ryan has worked as a professional dance performer for a wide range of choreographers, directors and companies from different artistic backgrounds for the last 10 years; these include Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Liz Roche, Philip Connaughton, Laura Murphy, Opera Theatre Company, Aine Stapleton, Jessie Keenan, Ponydance, Croi Glan, Mary Wycherley, Cie Willie Dörner, amongst others.

These have been for live performances, screen dance and visual art exhibitions alike with work that has toured nationally and internationally. She has also worked as an assistant for numerous choreographers on the creation and development of new work including work for the Abbey Theatre, as well as exploring collaboration with different artists for the creation of interdisciplinary performances.

Before settling in Ireland Sarah performed and choreographed work in Nantes, France after obtaining her First Class Honours Degree from the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance. She is delighted to be back working with John O'Brien and Éadaoin O'Donoghue after joining them for the acclaimed The Nightingale and the Rose.



**Karen Underwood**  
Morrigan (Actor)

A singer, writer, storyteller, and public speaker, Karen Underwood, hails from Chicago, Illinois, and has lived in Cork since 1997. Establishing herself as one of the city's and Ireland's foremost vocalists over the years, Karen has performed at Cork Opera House, The Everyman, The Olympia, The Gate, Vicar Street, The Blackbox, National Concert Hall, Marley Park and countless other venues across the country.

Karen's written and produced works include: The Nina in Me, an autobiographical show of her life and her many transitions from Chicago to Cork (National Concert Hall), Singing Nina (Vicar Street) The Story of Soul, performed at Soul in the City, Cork - an annual festival taking place since 2014, which she produces, highlighting soul music. Karen's interpretation of Black American music from the underground railroad to Cork - The Black American Songbook - debuted during the Cork Jazz Festival at Cork Opera House in 2021.



## Cork Opera House Concert Orchestra

Cork Opera House Concert Orchestra is a renowned professional orchestra in residence at Cork Opera House. Founded in 2016 for the acclaimed concert opera series, the orchestra has since played many concert performances of classic operas with some of the greatest Irish and international stars of opera. Events like The Cork Proms, Right Here Right Now and Christmas concerts have allowed the orchestra to work with many great artists from other genres, often with original orchestrations, resulting in unique collaborations. The orchestra has plans to grow in both size and number of performances over the next few years, as it faces a bright, dynamic future.

### Chorus:

Abbie Palliser-Kehoe - Soprano  
 Stefania Gombos - Soprano  
 Shauna Pumphrey - Soprano  
 Saoirse Garet - Soprano  
 Ellen Drummand - Soprano  
 Caitriona Fitzmaurice - Soprano  
 Ciara Finnerty - Soprano  
 Pamela Marshall - Alto  
 Jen O'Sullivan-Ryan - Alto  
 Sophie Daly-Wilson - Alto  
 Sinéad Carroll - Alto  
 Shauna Davies - Alto

Coral O'Sullivan - Alto  
 Jerome Maume - Tenor  
 Mark Milford - Tenor  
 Luke Condon - Tenor  
 Piersie O'Brien - Tenor  
 Peter O'Reilly - Tenor  
 Brian O'Connor - Tenor  
 Matt Palliser - Kehoe - Bass  
 Remy Laval - Bass  
 Pawel Switaj - Bass  
 Tom Harrington - Bass

<b>Violin 1</b>	<b>Alan Smale [Leader]</b> Leonie Curtin Maria Ryan David McElroy
<b>Violin 2</b>	<b>Tom Crowley</b> Mary McCague Christine Kenny Brendan Garde
<b>Viola</b>	<b>Catriona Lightfoot</b> Anthony Mulholland Niamh Quigley
<b>Cello</b>	<b>Ailbhe McDonagh</b> Aoife Burke Grace Coughlan
<b>Double Bass</b>	<b>Dave Whittle</b>
<b>Flute</b> <b>Oboe</b> <b>Bassoon</b> <b>Clarinet</b>	<b>Kieran Moynihan</b> María Rojas Íde Ni Chonail Conor Sheil
<b>French Horn</b>	<b>Cormac Ó hAodáin</b> Declan McCarthy Cuan Ó Seireadain Roddy O'Keeffe
<b>Trombone</b>	
<b>Harp</b>	<b>Anne-Marie Papin</b>

## Cork Opera House Staff

Chief Executive Officer **Eibhlín Gleeson**  
Executive Assistant to the CEO **Delia Webster**  
Head of Programming **Ashley Keating**  
Producer **Rory Murphy**  
Production Assistant **Christiana Underwood**  
Facilities Manager **Paul Finn**  
Marketing Assistant **Saoirse Murphy**  
Box Office Supervisors **Elaine Hayes, Sophie Coleman**  
Box Office Team **Nicole Clinton, Sally Maguire, Patty Maguire**  
Technical Manager **Chris Gaughan**  
Chief Electrician **Drew McCarthy**  
Deputy LX Lighting **Kieran Prendergast**  
Stage Manager **Declan O'Mullane**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Liam Harris**  
Fly Master **Billy Moore**  
Lighting Technicians **June Gonzalez, Jason Quirke, Joe O'Neill**  
Sound Technicians **Aaron Geary, Joe Cusack, Edan Ray**  
Stage Technician **Andrew Lane, John Hodder**

Deputy House Manager **Dave Cunningham**

House Team

**Jonathan Crean**  
**Catherine Coughlan**  
**Evan Good**  
**Louise Feehely**  
**Aoife Geary**  
**Kate Desmond**  
**Aoife Burke**  
**Clíodhna Gallagher**  
**Síofra Towe**  
**Roisin Towe**  
**Hannah Keating**  
**Eimear Hegarty**  
**Aoife Feehely**  
**Jude O'Neill**  
**Brian Coughan**  
**Sophie Cunningham**

Deputy Bar Manager **Sean Stack**

Bar Team

**Eva O'Riordan**  
**Ger Miller**  
**Aisling Creed**  
**Ciaran Coughlan**  
**Kamila Milostan**  
**James Coughlan**  
**Sinead Coughlan**  
**Orlaith Coughlan**  
**Michael McCarthy**

## Acknowledgements:

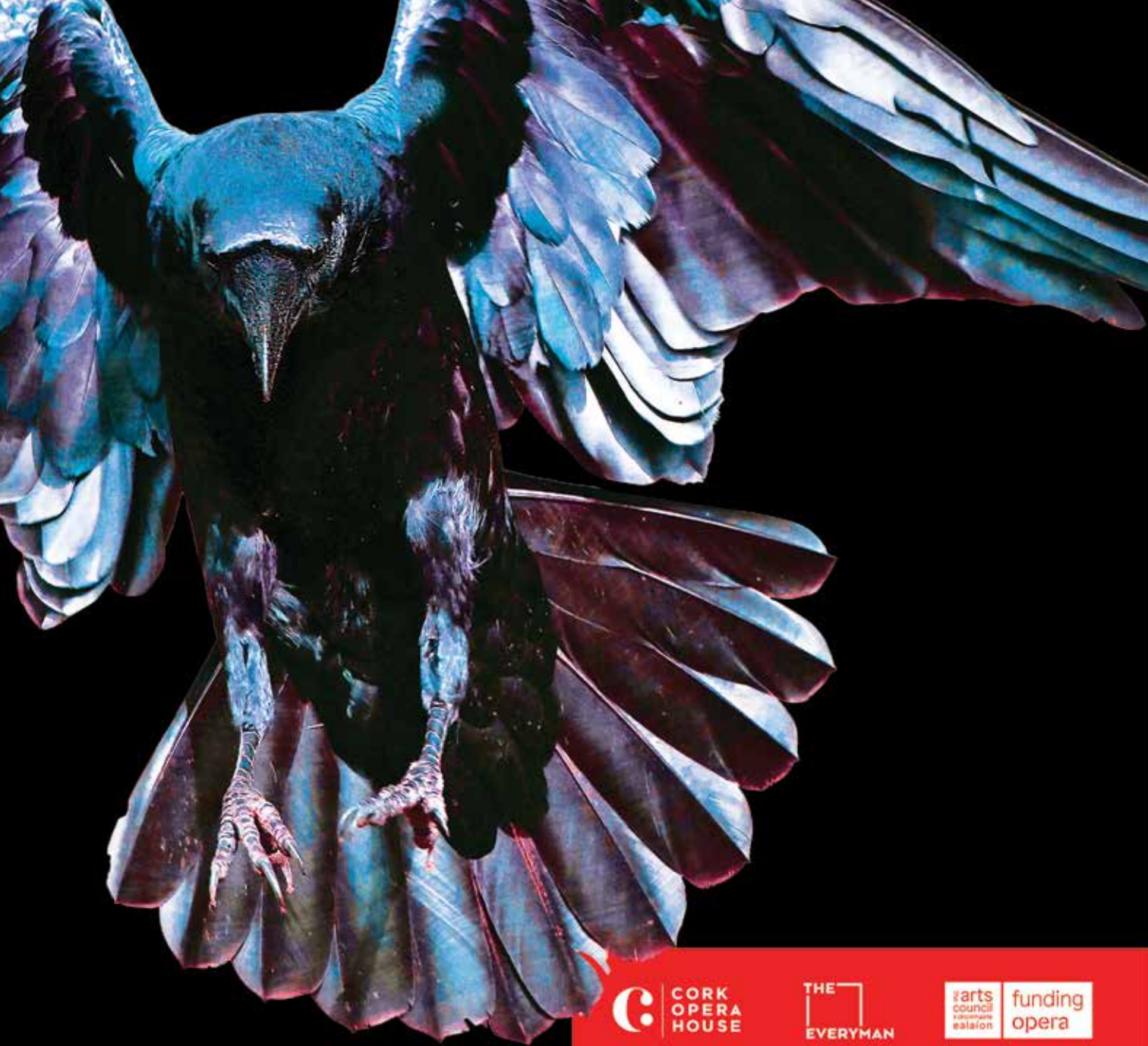
**Adrian O'Mahony**  
**Aikido Cork**  
**Alex Petcu**  
**Amhlaoibh O Donoghue**  
**Ann Dunphy**  
**Arts Council**  
**Ciara Glasheen Artem**  
**Ciara Moroney**  
**Cork City Council Arts Office**  
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**Louise O'Brien**  
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**Michael Murphy**  
**Michael Young**  
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**Niall Doyle**  
**People of Cork**  
**Presentation Secondary School**  
**Ram Gregorio**  
**Ronald Samm**  
**Sean Kelly**  
**Shane Horan**  
**Sinéad Wylde**  
**Sophie Motley**  
**The Everyman**  
**Triangle Productions**  
**Vierre Gregorio**

- Financial Services provided by Grant Thornton (Donna O'Sullivan & Rebecca McNerney).
- Marketing and PR Services provided by Blue Monkey PR (Michael Carr), with additional support provided by Fuller Marketing (Ruth Fuller).

# MORRÍGAN

She is the Irish Goddess of death and fate. Her story is visceral and primal – one of a beautiful, natural love thwarted by society, of Deirdre and the Sons of Usna, and of a king corrupted by lust and revenge who drags his kingdom to its doom.





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